

# **Amendment to General Management Plan Environmental Assessment**

## **Cape Lookout National Seashore**

### **ABSTRACT**

The goal of this general management plan amendment is to improve overnight accommodations and transportation services to persons visiting North Core Banks (excluding the Portsmouth Island area) and South Core Banks at Cape Lookout National Seashore. The amendment analyzes a broad range of possible alternative actions and recommends one for implementation. The scope of this amendment encompasses only changes to the current general management plan relative to providing improved overnight accommodation and transportation services to the areas previously noted.

An environmental assessment accompanying the amendment analyzes the effects of the preferred alternative and its alternatives. A Finding of No Significant Impact is attached and serves as the approval document for the amendment and the environmental assessment.

Generally, the National Park Service (NPS) prepares general management plans for units of the National Park System upon establishment and then every 15 to 20 years or sooner if warranted. The NPS expects to develop a new general management plan for Cape Lookout National Seashore within 5 to 7 years.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Southeast Regional Office





## Summary

This general management plan amendment examines a range of alternative actions intended to improve overnight accommodation and transportation services for persons visiting North Core Banks (excluding the Portsmouth area) and South Core Banks. The purpose of the amendment is to select and recommend for implementation a preferred action that most improves visitor services while continuing to preserve and protect the seashore's natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

After soliciting input from various Federal/State/local government representatives, organized interest groups, and concerned individuals, four alternative concepts were developed for more detailed public discussion. Of the four alternatives considered, two were identified as viable options for further consideration.

The two viable options were further evaluated by the NPS with careful consideration given to any additional information and recommendations provided during the initial review period. Based on the general management plan (GMP) amendment issues developed during the public participation process, a comparison of the two viable alternatives to a continuation of existing conditions was used to select a preferred plan for implementation.

In summary, the preferred plan is:

1. Negotiate long-term contracts with concessionaires to transport visitors and vehicles from the towns of Davis, North Carolina and Atlantic, North Carolina to Great Island and Long Point, both sites on the Core Banks, Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina.
2. Improve overnight accommodations by removing old cabins at Great Island and constructing 30 new cabins.
3. Add 10 new cabins at Long Point.
4. Improve Individual Business Permit (IBP) relationships by issuing biennial IBPs to small craft operators that provide transport services to visitors to the Cape Lookout Keeper's Quarters area.
5. The number of parking spaces near the Keeper's Quarters would be reduced.

The NPS proposes one alternative plan. In summary, the alternative plan is:

1. Negotiate long-term contracts with concessioners to transport visitors and vehicles from Davis and Atlantic to Great Island and Long Point.
2. Improve overnight accommodations by removing old cabins at Great Island, constructing new 30 units, of which 10 units would be rustic with communal baths;
3. Adding 10 rustic lodging units with communal baths at Long Point; and
4. Improve IBP relationship and issue annual IBPs to small craft operators to provide transport services for visitors to the Cape Lookout Keeper's Quarters area.
5. The number of parking spaces near the Keeper's Quarters would be reduced. At Long Point and Great Island reduce number of parking spaces from 60 down to 30 during primary nesting/hatchling season.

The Alternative Plan differs from the Preferred Plan in that the 10 units at Long Point would be rustic with communal baths; 10 of the 30 Units at Great Island would be rustic with communal baths; only 30 parking spaces would be available for parking at Long Point and Great Island during the primary turtle and plover nesting/hatchling period; and IBPs would be issued annually instead of biannually.

An Environmental Assessment was undertaken concurrently during this planning process to initiate the administrative processes required by the National Environmental Policy Act and to provide evidence and analysis for determining the path of environmental compliance for the proposed actions.

Environmental impacts to the natural and cultural environments of the national seashore resulting from implementation of either the preferred or alternative plans are anticipated to be insignificant. Under both plans, an emphasis would be placed on monitoring the effects of visitors and visitor use patterns on threatened and endangered species and their habitat and increasing visitor awareness of the island's special resources. Scheduling construction would in part be based upon NPS monitoring and study of ORVs and human interference on these species.

The Environmental Assessment also introduced a no action alternative and assessed the effects of taking "no action".





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